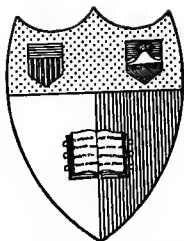


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THIS, MY SINGING





# THIS, MY SINGING

BY VERA WHEATLEY

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LONDON, W.C.1

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*First Published . . . December 1919*

I send my heart up to thee, all my heart  
In this my singing.

BROWNING.



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## LOVE POEMS



## LOVE'S DREAMING

SPIRIT of Peace, enfold me with thy wings,  
Spirit of Love, remember thrall of thine,  
And soothe my soul with some melodious dream. . . .

How many Springs have passed together now ? . . .  
First the sweet Spring of unconfessed love,  
Which, when the next one grew, and all was known,  
Seemed, with its glamour of uncertainty,  
More dear perhaps than even youth had guessed.  
Followed that Spring when friendly hearts rejoiced  
For us—we grieved that secrecy had fled.  
Then last of all that Spring, when love took toll  
Of careless youth, and something fragrant died  
That never could to either heart return.  
Though power of love were tenfold, and no more  
Did night, with all its fond absurdity  
Of long-drawn out farewell, part you and me—  
Yet there was just some little lurking loss.  
What though the Spring shall bloom ten thousand  
times,  
Each year most exquisite, most delicate ?  
The young, sweet Spring of love can live but  
once.  
Summer succeeds, ay, and a queen is she,  
But, oh, alas ! Spring's witchery is dead.

## THIS, MY SINGING

What shall I do, what shall I do,  
When young love lies a-dying ?  
Hands and feet and breasts and eyes  
He 'll kiss no more when he 's grown wise—  
What shall I do ?

Woman, woman, cease your sighing,  
What if young love be a-dying ?  
What if hands, and hair, and eyes  
Be kissed no more ?  
Well, if you 're wise,  
And hide your hurt with woman's art—  
He 'll kiss them still within his heart.

I was a child not very long ago,  
Death was a Word, a grim, dark word to me—  
Where sunlight fell in multi-coloured gleams  
Making mosaics changeful in the aisle,  
I sang with others that I longed to be  
Up with the angels—up in Heaven with God . . .  
And all the while my riotous child's heart  
Longed for the sun with no stained glass  
between—  
Longed to be free—to shout and dance and play,  
Where Nature lived, and loved to live, like me . . .  
That little pagan heart, when older grown,  
Feeling the first dark shadowing of loss,  
Thought God were kind had He but taken it  
First of them all—before it met with Grief.

## LOVE'S DREAMING

To-day, when love of loves lies 'twixt two hearts,  
Division, parting, death—are bitter words,  
And yet I pray you may go first to learn  
The mystery of death, the dawn of God.  
For when good-bye was said, perhaps I could  
Better live out the lonely end of things—  
Beside, how could I rest in Heaven's peace,  
Watching your stumbling footsteps and your tears ?

Love is carolled as a child,  
Yet is lord of all,  
Bitterness and enmity  
Lie beneath his thrall.

Love is pictured as a child,  
Love, wherefore is this ?  
Worlds have withered at your touch,  
Blossomed at your kiss.

Love is painted as a child,  
A little child with wings—  
But a vasty soul has Love,  
Mighty words he sings.

Love that is empty of all memories  
Is worthless. They 've not loved who cannot say,  
'Remember !' Even, whispering, 'Forget !'  
Nothing exists without its daily food,  
Even great Love—I feed him momentarily,  
For we have many memories, thank God.

## THIS, MY SINGING.

What though the streets of town be cold and  
grey? . . .

Fling up remembrance of some ivied wood,

Where, exquisite in purity and grace,

Anemones sway mist-like for our joy. . . .

Life, art a dull and lonely thing to-day?

Love conjures up a vision of delight. . . .

A Surrey heath beneath a boundless sky,

Regal with purple, prodigal of gold—

Between the scents of heather and of gorse,

We lie to recapitulate our song.

But when the dullness and the solitude

Is no corollary of leaden skies,

Or grey and drear monotony of rain,

Or coldness of the stone beneath one's feet . . .

But loneliness, bred, nurtured in the heart,

Impatient of all outside influence—

Then Love loves best the dream of dark'ning room,

Of leaping shadow, whisper-laden dusk—

Of poignant scent of early flowers of Spring,

Pale gleaming from the corners and the shelf—

Of low and reddening fire, in which to build

Dream-castles—see them flame awhile—and die. . . .

Oh, dear and far-away the hours when Love,

And you, and I, made blind man's holiday.

Up on the cliffs in the morning wind,

We were together—the Fates were kind.

The sea ran high and our spirits too—

I was a wild thing and so were you,

## LOVE'S DREAMING

Heads upthrown, the better to sing,  
Oh, I was a flirt and a foolish thing. . . .  
    Why, why, why did you love me so ?

Down in the valley at warm noontide,  
You gathered me closely into your side,  
And we watched the bee-folk drunken pass  
While we lay hidden in the grass—  
And the scents and the sounds of the warm  
    noonday  
Stole into your blood in a magic way. . . .  
    Oh, oh, oh, but you loved me then.

Out in the wood at eventide,  
I crept, I crept close into your side,  
Haunting and mystic the moonlight cold,  
Holding a fear after day's rich gold—  
Folly and sunshine together were flown,  
Heart beat to heart, you made me your own. . . .  
    Love, love, love, how you quickened then.

So, Sorrow, dim-faced Thing which hov'rest near,  
I 'll charm thee into nothingness with dreams.

## WINGED THOUGHTS

I SOMETIMES feel when I 'm a-roam  
No harm can touch the little home,  
Because my faith, old-fashioned writ,  
Pleads all the while with God for it.

I sometimes think, presumptuously,  
That naught can happen ill to thee,  
Nor woes befall, nor cloudy cares—  
Thou art so compassed round with prayers.

I sometimes lie when dawn is near,  
With thy quiet breathing at my ear,  
To dream that prayers wing through the roof,  
And up and through the sky, as proof  
That love on earth exists so sweet  
That Heav'n without were incomplete.



## INCORRIGIBLE

LIGHT look, light jest, and gay words to and fro,  
These happen often, often, as you know—  
    Can your jealousy descry  
    Ought for its sparks to fly ?

Love-words as light as down—careless caress,  
These to-day, to-morrow too—as you guess.  
    - Can your jealousy discern  
    Ought for its fire to burn ?

Love, you must know by now 'tis lips and eyes,  
That the heart has no share when nonsense flies—  
    That no phrase of theirs can make  
    My soul's least shadow quake.

And you, Love, know too well the word to speak  
Which blinds the eye, brings the hot blood to cheek—  
    And the smallest touch of you  
    Will send a tremble through.

All this you know, and knowing, can you care  
If there be others who may find me fair ?  
    Lip and eye for those will do . . .  
    The heart and soul for you.

## TOGETHER IN SUMMER

WE'RE alone in the green delight  
Of the world where the daisies nod—  
We're a-daze in the golden haze,  
And the lark above soars out of sight  
With our wordless prayer to God.

We're alone in the sultry noon,  
Now the morning breeze has fled,  
We're a-dream where the sunbeams gleam,  
And the queen-rose hangs her head.  
We're a-roam in the shadowed wood,  
Where my dear love's heart was born,  
We're asleep where the poppies peep  
Through the yellow, mellow corn.  
We're alone all the wand'ring day,  
With the summer sky above,  
We're afire with a sweet desire,  
While we dream of life and love.

We're alone in the green delight  
Of the world where the daisies nod,  
We're a-daze in the golden haze,  
And the lark above soars out of sight  
With our wordless prayer to God.

## TOGETHER IN WINTER

WHEN all the joy of summer 's gone, and we 're alone  
together,  
When green and gold have disappeared and worlds  
are white and grey,  
Then we 'll sit down before the fire in sorrow's weary  
weather,  
And side-by-side we 'll whisper of the passing,  
darling day.

When all the bonny birds are dumb and wistful  
winds are calling,  
When dear dead flowers strew the path where once we  
loved to stray,  
When nothing lights the heavy sky, and shrivelled  
leaves are falling,  
Then hand-in-hand we 'll whisper of the quickly  
dying day.

When all the lavish green is dead that singing  
summer squandered,  
When no one cares to pass along our dear, deserted  
way—  
When heather 's dying on the moors where you and  
I have wandered,  
Then cheek to cheek we 'll whisper by the fire, of  
love's long day.

## MATED

JUST so much speech as we might hold,  
In the hollow of our hands—  
Just the short glance which no one sees,  
Save the one who understands,  
Just so much joy and hope and trust  
To build a friendship rare—  
Just these and all the soul holds hid  
Make life and the future fair.

## THE MEETING AT EVENING

OH, how I 've lived to this long day,  
Through the months and months of parting,  
Then, how my heart beat fast at last,  
Though the foolish tears were starting.

And so we met, with a cordial word,  
With a handshake—nothing nearer,  
But your bright eyes said all to me—  
And each knew the other dearer.

Ah, but my soul has lived with yours,  
While my body has been roaming—  
And all the joy of the world was mine  
When I met you in the gloaming.

## TOGETHER

THE long, long hours of shadowed grey  
Sent Sorrow lingering by—  
So silence fell where joy had lived,  
And laughter seemed to die.

Then in a quiet hour your arms  
Gave happiness again,  
And love was all-in-all once more  
Despite the mournful rain.

We whispered then of sacred things,  
Of Love's resplendent fears,  
But all the passion and desire  
Were purified by tears.

Heart beating close to heart we lay,  
By tender thoughts beguiled,  
And saw with eyes made dim by love  
Our dream-encircled child.

## PARTING

WE have no need of words to tell our love,  
You and I,  
 No need of fond reiterate phrase, our tenderness to  
 prove,  
 For, while we murmur foolishly so many foolish  
 things,  
 Love comes springing up and over in a mad flame of  
 fire  
 To silence with his burning breath all simple whis-  
 perings.

There is no need of words for the farewell  
   'Twixt you and me—  
 No need of sorrowing phrase the dread of parting to  
       foretell,  
 Even no need of kisses or long glance from eye to  
       eye—  
 Oh, wave of passionate wordless grief, that suddenly  
       leaps up,  
 And, breaking wide, engulfs and drowns conventional  
       good-bye.

## SEPARATION

BEARING its varied burden to the depth  
Of some mysterious, uncharted sea,  
Day after day slips noiselessly away,  
And still I have nor sight nor sound of thee.

See the spring flowers awake in every wood,  
Or the blue sky lean down to summer's sea,  
Or Autumn don her russet cap and shoon—  
And still I have nor touch nor glance of thee.

Then winter's wind steals restless round the house,  
And winter's snow falls deeply over all,  
So creeping canker doth my soul beset,  
And loneliness oppress me like a pall.

Then my heart fails awhile—I am afraid—  
And, like a little child in some dark place,  
I shut my eyes to paint thee on the lids,  
Fearing to lose the memory of thy face. . . .

. . . . .  
Night comes to charm insidious evil far,  
To spell despair from out the heart of me. . . .  
Thy shadowed coming colours all my dreams,  
My sleep is sweet with memories of thee.

## LONELY

A DANGEROUS facility for the wearing of a mask,  
A brave appearance to the world, a very simple task—  
Ready the laugh, the cheery phrase, the gay, courageous tone,

These easily my own—  
But oh, the mask of bravery,  
The careless mask of bravery,  
Drops down, drops down so wantonly, when I am  
all alone.

The higher aim of strife, which all the day I hold in  
mind,  
The tale of fine heroic deeds which alchemise mankind,  
Are less than nothingness beside the trivial things I  
knew  
Once, long ago, with you—  
And, oh, that mask of bravery,  
That worthless mask of bravery  
Falls off, falls off as readily, as quickly as it grew.

'Tis not the temporary loss of love which breaks my  
heart  
In that chill hour of dark when worlds and I are far  
apart,



## LONELY

'Tis little things, the trivial things I passionately  
miss—

The unexpected kiss !—

Oh, careful mask of bravery,

Habitual mask of bravery,

You're such a foolish mockery because of things  
like this.

## LOVE

In the darkness and the stillness of the night,  
I lie awake and think awhile of you,  
And, in amongst the hopes and fears of love,  
A little thought of God comes creeping too ;  
And a wistful prayer, half-formed, half-said, steals up  
That He will bless you wheresoe'er you go—  
A little prayer fit for the Feet of God,  
Because I love you so.

In the sunshine and the glory of the day,  
I dream of songs that only you should see—  
Yet I am wordless while I lack the crown  
Of woman's life, which you shall give to me.  
One day, from out my living, loving soul,  
Up to the very Heart of Heaven shall go  
A perfect melody of perfect joy—  
Because you love me so.

## THE EMPTY HOUSE

HERE is but dust and gloomy silence,  
The casual passer-by,  
Shuddering, goes—but I  
Linger alone . . . and from each corner  
Remembrance springs and glances,  
And sunshine dances.

Here was the cord of love first woven,  
Each strand a thread of gold—  
Weaving, we twain were bold,  
Knowing, though little time was given,  
Each mute caress would lengthen,  
Each smile must strengthen.

Here were the days too young for sorrow,  
The time too short for tears,  
So, through the lonely years,  
Memory holds but radiant hours—  
Echoes of laughter ringing,  
And youth's gay singing.

Listen . . . the well-remembered footstep . . .  
And then the well-loved smile,  
Lives with my heart awhile . . .  
A ghost walks with me, whispering,  
Of day-long love and laughter,  
And kisses after. . . .

## SONG

COME, my lover—come, my lover,  
Now above my dreaming eyes  
The dusky skies, the dusky skies  
Blossom anew with pallid stars that glide  
Timidly out, like windflowers in a wood  
Dimly discerned at eventide.

Come, my lover—come, my lover,  
Lay thy head between my breasts,  
Where sweet it rests, where sweet it rests—  
In that soft valley, sleep thy cares away,  
So, dream-enfolded by the night and me,  
Thou mayst forget the weary day.

## WHEN YOU COME BACK

SOMETIMES I think when you come back,  
You 'll find me tired and sad and old,  
So long it is since we twain said good-bye—  
And yet within my heart I fold  
The dear remembrance of a happier day,  
And well I know, when you come back,  
That these sad, lonely years will fall away,  
Like stars from out a dream-enchanted sky,  
And nothing, nothing I shall lack,  
    When you come back.

# CHILD SONGS



## MATERNITY

LITTLE child, laughing child,  
    Standing at my knee,  
With your little flower-face,  
    And awful purity—  
Little child, little child,  
    Help me with my part,  
And divine the mother-love  
    Which rends, which rends my heart.

---

*‘ That love of children which rends the heart.’*

—H. G. WELLS.

## NEWBORN

It seems such a strange new world,  
Where the folk have their wings all furled,  
And there 's never a drift of cloud,  
Or the Heaven song ringing loud.  
And never an earth-sun flings  
The shadow of angel wings,  
    And I miss, oh, I miss,  
    The angel-kiss.

## WINTER'S DREAMING

I SEE their shadows here and there,  
And hear their voices ringing,  
I shut my eyes and wait—then feel  
Their little warm arms clinging.  
I hear some little dream-sobs too  
Within the wind's soft sighing—  
And, oh, the love that fills my heart  
For those dream-babies crying.

That little dream-home through the mist,  
I know—and love it dearly,  
And in the twilight winter woods  
I see it all so clearly.  
Then there are voices far away,  
Amid the snow's soft falling—  
And, oh, the love that breaks my heart  
For my dream-children calling.



## UNBORN

THE leafy buds are showing on the brittle winter twig,  
The crocus buds are breaking through their sheaths  
of emerald green,

The seedling wakes and quickly grows—it gets so  
big, so big,  
And knows that it shall be the sweetest flower the  
world has seen.

The birds begin their chatter in the early morning grey,  
The soul awakes and whispers to the dawning—‘ Is  
it true ? ’

Life stirs in Nature’s bosom in the old familiar way—  
Oh, Spring, the barren world is waiting restlessly for  
you !

A little life is stirring with the childhood of the year,  
Enmeshed in dreams—a rainbow web of mingled  
life and death,

The rapture and the agony, they loom so near, so near,  
That in the quiet dark of night, I scarcely can draw  
breath.

It is so passionately sweet, this payment of Love’s debt,  
That I resent the coming Spring when it were time  
to part—

Some winter days are with us still, a little longer yet,  
Lie close and warm, oh, baby life, beneath your  
mother’s heart.

## SLEEP

HERE he comes stealing over the hill,  
    (Little grey goblin, oh !)  
Slinks through the farmyard, round the old mill,  
    (Little grey goblin, oh !)  
Children run from him, wave good-bye,  
But he will catch them all, say I—  
Out of his little grey bag he gives  
Something to each little child that lives,  
    (Little grey goblin, hi !)

Here he comes silently down the lane,  
    (Little grey goblin, oh !)  
When the sun's crimson, day's on the wane,  
    (Little grey goblin, ho !)  
Old folk come to him, limpin', hobblin',  
' Give us out o' your bag, grey goblin !'  
But he shakes his head with impish glee,  
' Naught for the old 'uns, no, not me !'  
    (Wicked grey goblin, hi !)

## PARTED

OH, mother, tender-eyed and God-belovèd,  
Can Heaven's glory satiate your dreaming ?  
Can gold and amber in their vast perspective  
Cool your earthly ardour ? . . . Beryl, jacinth,  
Amethyst and sapphire force your heart  
To burn, as one perplexing baby-smile  
Had curious power before God parted you ?

Can all the ecstasies of Heaven laid open  
To spirit eyes, forever compensate  
For bitter loss of certain earthly things—  
The clinging hands, the soft pulsating body ?  
Can the dream-whirr of angels' heavy Wings  
Grow dearer than a baby's sleepy breathing ?  
Or the tremendous touch of Wings in passing  
Thrill sweet as little fingers at your breast ?

You, before whom the mysteries of God  
Lie vast and clear as blue, transparent waters,  
Do you stretch forth your hands beyond the stars  
Yearning to draw your baby to your side ?  
Are all the clarities of Heaven naught  
Beside that weak, mysterious child-smile  
That now another in the Mother's place  
Interprets as she wills ?

## TO A CHILD

LIFE is long, dear, so they tell us,  
And sometimes folk get weary—  
But you 'll agree with me, I think,  
'Tis folly to be dreary.

Love is good, dear, so love wisely,  
Find joy in bud and berry—  
I 've learnt, though I 'm not very old,  
'Tis wisdom to be merry.

## GOD OF LITTLE THINGS

ONLY a little foolish fun,  
Its merry race was quickly run—  
Yet it was full of joy and love,  
I thank Thee for it, God above.

Only a day of foolish fun,  
That seemed to die when just begun—  
For lonely days are here again,  
That speak of sorrow, whisper pain.

Yet now a little gleam of gold  
Will light my life so drear and cold,  
For the memory of that day  
Will live and glow in me alway.

So I must thank Thee, God, anew,  
For all the foolish fun I knew,  
Yet not the veiled God with wings,  
—My childish God of Little Things.

The God who gave me a fine day,  
A rocking-horse if I did pray,  
Nothing was too small for Him—  
A child will pray for any whim.

## THIS, MY SINGING

I know He always answered me,  
(For God of Little Things was He),  
And I can never quite forget,  
Some days He is with me yet.

For God is all too great, you see,  
To thank for fun and gaiety,  
Although my heart is full of praise  
For this and other funny days.

I needs must pray a little space . . .  
While Greater God doth hide His Face  
Within His wonder-working Wings,  
I 'll thank Thee, God of Little Things.

. . . . .  
When I have prayed a little while,  
I wonder with a secret smile  
If, after all, the God of Wings  
Is also God of Little Things.

# SONGS OF DEATH





## MAY HARRHY

Out into the dark you went, and it befell,  
Of all who loved you so, none was beside  
To hold your hand, or say farewell.

Out into the Light you went, and not alone—  
For sure am I, oh, dear and gallant heart,  
God came from Heaven to claim His Own.

## DEATH PUT OUT HIS HAND

No mourning garment I displayed for you,  
Nor showed but little outward sign of woe,  
So, in that Heaven of yours—(for this I know,  
If Heaven were not, they had made Heaven anew  
As guerdon for your spirit bold and true)—  
There in that peace perhaps your tears fall slow,  
Thinking yourself forgotten here below,  
For that I weave no rosemary and rue.

I am not free from fret of circumstance,  
From care to care I turn and so must seem,  
Like Martha, busy and forgetful, yet  
Often I read you in some gay romance,  
Call you at dawn, or, in some vagrant dream,  
Hold you and whisper I do not forget.

## REST

LIE quietly down when sunset 's over,  
And all your daydreams slowly reap—  
Then say a prayer for you and me, dear,  
And shut your tired eyes and sleep.

Lie quietly down when life seems over,  
No longer laugh—no longer weep,  
Remember love was God's bestowing—  
So shut your tired eyes and sleep.

## MABEL

WE gave you love, and would have kept you to your  
earthly joys and cares,  
But God knew best—  
He loved you most, so, with soft Fingers, He shut  
down your tired eyes,  
To give you Rest.

## LONELY IN HEAVEN

CAN it be true those laughing eyes  
And wind-tossed hair and lips a-smile  
Are lying closed—and straight—and meek—  
The whole cold face so strangely wise—  
Friends weeping round you all the while,  
And joyous life so far to seek ?

    You, that so hated tears,  
    All through your splendid years—  
    Is it good-bye to you—

        Can it be true ?

    You that loved joy so well,  
    Can you have gone to dwell,  
Up, as the stories tell, in the vast blue ?

Sometimes, beloved, for a space,

    I think I see you pace,

Lonely in that great place, that Paradise—  
    God's Garden.

## AFTERWARDS

How to say good-bye to grief too deep for mortal's  
hearing,

How to welcome life when all the fog of stupor's  
clearing,

How unravel all the tangle,

Soften all the jar and jangle,

How to live and love and listen—how begin again ?

How to shut the grieving down without the gay  
world knowing,

How to start life all afresh with unloved dreams  
a-glowing ? . . .

If you turn the key on sorrow,

Standing up to meet the morrow—

Love will teach your stumbling feet a road of joy  
again.

## LOYALTY

I LONGED so much to write the song that strained  
To break its bonds within my heart to-day,  
Yet, though I craved to write its mystery down,  
Something within me stirred and said me nay.  
I longed to wing its beauty through the world,  
And yet—was I so foolish or so wise?—  
I could not hurt the wraith of dear, dead Love,  
That stood beside me with such wistful eyes.

### ‘ COLD HANDS—WARM HEART ’

So soft and warm your little hands,  
So soft and warm your naked feet—  
I hold them to my happy heart, altho’ you smile,  
And whisper I shall never break the bands  
That bind your callous heart awhile—  
I know that heart is cold—and yet the hours are sweet.

So cold, so cold your slender hands,  
So cold, so cold your naked feet—  
I press them to my anguished heart—they stir no  
more—  
And you—the Spirit You—afar off stands,  
Then, while I kiss your lifeless fingers o’er,  
I dream your little heart in Heav’n is warm and sweet.

## RESURRECTION

BELOVED, when you and I have grown so old  
That all the seasons seem as cold,  
And, worn with toil, we seek a resting-place  
Where no-one's face comes in between—  
I wonder then, if struggle dies with us,  
If ev'ry dead dream cries with us  
That all our plans have been but children's toys—  
And so much noise our happy songs have been ?

Beloved, some tell us that relentless death  
Must one day bring us final breath,  
That we shall then go out to endless night,  
Who so loved light—loved Love so much—  
Well, that would be, you 'd had a lust of me,  
And then you 'd have the dust of me—  
Proving love's magic iridescent mesh  
But of the flesh—the lure of Eyes and Touch.

Beloved, if that oblivion be not ours  
They say we shall have heavenly hours,  
Which seem such faint exchange for earthly days,  
For heaven's ways are all amazing.  
Some angel gives a halo bright to you,  
A harp to me, a robe of blue. . . .  
Oh, love, I hear our shameless laughter  
Ring, and after, Heaven's furtive gazing.

## RESURRECTION

Oh, no, that Heaven is all too set and fair,  
Beloved, I cannot see us there—  
On earth we wrangled, wrought and just began  
Our glimpse of man, our need of making,  
Our building, losing, all our great beginnings,  
Our hopes, our fears, our feeble winnings,  
Our love, our laughter, and our sometime weeping,  
Each sweet sleeping and each splendid waking. . . .

Beloved, shall little earthly years forever  
Our vivid lure of life disserve ?  
Shall you and I beneath the quiet earth  
Forget our mirth, our life's sweet spending ?  
And learn to long for endless peace and rest,  
To lie so quiet and know it best  
That all was done ? . . . For us and others too,  
Life-lovers true, this never is the ending.

Beloved, we know this tired, earthly shell  
Must one day weary out. 'Tis well,  
A little while our heart with it shall be  
In harmony, beneath the sod—  
Patient, because we see a further goal,  
A further effort for the soul—  
Because one day, we shall arise and hear  
So loud and near, the clarion call of God.





## OTHER POEMS



## AS I LAY A-DREAMING

As I lay a-dreaming in a little sunbright room,  
Fast fled the shadow of the cruel winter's gloom—  
I thought I heard a whisp'ring, a stirring and a  
    humming  
In some far distant woodland, that told of sweet  
    things coming—  
Of primroses and violets and a drift of blackthorn  
    snow,  
And other tender, lovely things our sad hearts used  
    to know,  
The cuckoo's soft impertinence—the blackbird's  
    silver tone,  
And my lost Love a-singing in the green ways all  
    alone—  
Oh . . . !  
I saw the cloak of happiness being woven on Spring's  
    loom,  
As I lay a-dreaming in a little sunbright room.

## THE PRICE

Out from my light and happiness I creep,  
Into the dark without I wander free,  
Within their safety all my dear ones sleep,  
—A ghost walks close with me.

Many a day I have been safe within,  
My life all joy, myself a thing apart,  
But a voice mocks me with an old-time sin,  
—A flame leaps in my heart.

Out I crept, whispering the old-time charms,  
Seeking a long-lost madness once again,  
A ghost comes murmuring into my arms,  
—Whose chilly breath spells pain.

Waking again long-atrophied desire,  
Round me the ghost-like arms steal as of old,  
Comes the remembered kiss that once was fire,  
—And now is dead and cold.

Lo, the dead arms have lost their strength and power,  
Only the eyes glow live 'neath deathly brow,  
And so compel all memory to this hour,  
—Which can but torture now.

## THE PRICE

Far, far away, my ghost I think must live,  
Its flesh be warm, its mouth all melody,  
But I—I sinned long since—the hour can give  
—Naught but a ghost to me.

Back to my sheltered happiness I go,  
Where dark and ghastly dreams I may deride. . . .  
Yet in cold hours my ghost will walk, I know,  
—And force me to his side.

## SUNSET ON THE SEA

As I lay in the green grass on the downs,  
The twilight wind a-singing in my heart,  
Alone, and far from all the hum of towns,  
I watched where all the guilty seabirds start.  
I listened, but, alas, the tale was told,  
And quiet lay the wide, enchanting sea,  
Yet God had made a little path of gold  
From shore to sky—for me.

## FRIENDSHIP

SOMEWHERE afar, the song of a lonely bird—exquisite,  
tremulous, shy,

Waking the echoes of the dreaming wood, it thrilled  
and soared—to die.

I spoke of trivial things with trivial words, yet all  
the heart of me

Feared lest the rustling of the leaves beneath our feet  
had checked that melody.

Were the same feelings in your heart just then? I  
could not tell and yet I guessed

That they were there—rapturous, inarticulate—  
behind the foolish jest.

We wandered on and thirsty eyes and ears drank in  
the murmurous beauty,

The while we talked of subjects stark and grim—  
work and a woman's duty.

We laid us down on dying leaves—(dreamed of a  
mist of bluebells in the glade)

Yet spoke of earthly things—of our hearts' loveliness  
our lips were all afraid.

Such has our friendship always been—a bond un-  
breakable, divine yet cruel,

Spending its force without reward, a quenchless fire  
kept burning without fuel,

## FRIENDSHIP

Always this talk of trivial things, always each life  
from the other hidden,  
A living love, yet nourished all unseen and all expres-  
sion self-forbidden,  
So it has been with us alway—so it will be when you  
and I are old—  
Yet close and deep within our hearts, the songbirds'  
magic and the beechen gold.

## WHITE AND GOLD

THE raindrop kisses the sweet white may,  
And the sunshine comes and goes—  
I love the gold of laburnum gay,  
The snow of the guelder-rose.  
The walls are white with a starry flower,  
And the broom 's a yellow fire,  
The buttercup lives his merry hour—  
The daisy for his desire.  
But there 's no snow in the whole world fair  
Like a throat so white and cold—  
And the yellow of a woman's hair  
Is dearer than all the gold.

## A CYNIC'S EXPLANATION

I HAD given you all—my everything,  
My heart and my soul laid bare,  
To you, who were sun and stars to me—  
Wind-song and blossom rare.  
All I had loved in life I found  
In my magic love for you,  
You—who were sea and stream to me,  
Rainfall and morning-dew.

So, when you put my love aside,  
With your careless, jesting phrase,  
Out into Sorrow's world I fled,  
Into her April ways.  
As you had scorned my hungry heart  
Which had held all loves in you,  
Straight from your side I went to win  
The older loves anew.

But sun and sea and windy hill—  
The purple and the grey—  
Allured no more. Their charm had died  
In yours that April day.



## A WOMAN'S WORD

It lay at your feet, my love for you, friend,  
And you feigned to stoop to it—vainly—  
I knew that you scorned it end to end.  
The reason? Well, 'twas mainly  
That you asked me more in a day gone by,  
That was why  
The friendship fractured—never to mend.

You asked me much, but did I give less,  
When my heart swelled over and over,  
And held you fast in such tenderness,  
(Though it would not welcome the lover?)  
Affection—the word itself sounds cold—  
Yet fold on fold  
It wrapped you round in a deep caress.

So useless to fret when the thing is done—  
But a paradox rings in my head.  
I lose you and hold you—the two in one,  
'Tis good-bye, though the word 's never said.  
Oh, friend, how I loved, how I love you still—  
But drear and chill  
The friendship falters—its race is run.

## SUNDAY IN MY GARDEN

As I worked in my garden,  
There was never a priest,  
But I kept Sunday's law—  
And the greatest was least.  
For the first little primrose  
That gleamed from the sod,  
Was the King of the garden—  
A sweet smile from God.

As I worked in my garden  
The smell of the earth  
Was the incense uprising  
To praise life's new birth.  
And the hymn in my garden  
Was a bird's melody,  
And each bud and leaflet  
Showed Heaven to me.

There was no priestly discourse,  
There was no spoken prayer,  
As I worked in my garden—  
But I know God was there.

## THE CALL OF THE LEAVES

JUST at the turn o' the year,  
With a hey, down derry oh,  
Folly came creeping to my side—  
I gazed at him all wonder-wide,  
Just at the turn o' the year.  
Says he, ' My dear,  
Down in the woodlands the leaves are calling,  
Come you to join in their merry falling,  
Come you to join in their golden glory  
To hear their last wild, impish story—  
Walk you ankle-deep in mud,  
Watching the woodland stream in flood,  
With a hey, down derry oh ! '

Says I, ' 'Tis the turn o' the year,  
With your hey, down derry oh,  
The nights are growing bitter cold,  
And I, O Folly, growing old,  
Just at the turn o' the year—'  
Says he, ' My dear,  
Never I knew you so hard o' hearing . . .  
Down in the beechwood there 's a clearing,  
Carpeted thick with leaves of yellow,  
And the wind tears through with a mighty bellow,  
And the sky 's slate-blue and the sun is cold—  
And nobody, nobody 's growing old,  
Sing hey, down derry oh ! '

## THIS, MY SINGING

Just at the turn o' the year,  
With a hey, down derry oh,  
I slipped me out by Folly's side,  
No more within my heart would bide,  
At the turn o' the year—  
Says he, ' My dear,  
Here 's the woodland's perfect story,  
Its blaze of crimson, gold and glory ;  
Here 's the sharp air, sun's cold kisses,  
Hips and haws and such like blisses—  
Stay with Folly, sweetheart, stay,  
Here for ever and a day,  
Singing hey, down derry oh ! '

Alas, 'tis the turn o' the year,  
With your hey, down derry oh—  
The leaves come falling, twisting by,  
And soon their borrowed gold must die  
At the turn o' the year.  
Says I, ' My dear,  
Back to my fireside I 'll be creeping,  
Out in the woods my heart lay sleeping,  
I left it there a night long fleeting,  
To-day it rose not, gave no greeting. . . .  
Folly dear, 'tis growing cold, -  
Good-bye—good-bye . . . for I am old . . .  
With a hey, down derry oh ! '

## TRAPPED

No air—no air—limbs pinioned fast,  
Warned over and over—caught at last.  
God—will that tap-tapping never cease,  
So heralding release ?

Two wild, mad eyes, close, so close to mine,  
Another man alive, poor, helpless swine—  
Two wretched souls here, one without sense  
Through torture of suspense.

Here 's something cold, so cold, next my face,  
Only a limp, dead hand. . . . Give me space,  
Just to breathe, O God, in Thy love,  
Till they break through, above.

A tightening at the throat . . . is it Death ? . . .  
Fumes dense . . . and denser . . . can't draw  
    breath . . .  
You 'll be too late . . . friends . . . up there . . .  
God . . . for more air . . .

## GOD INCOMPREHENSIBLE

IF God be but a human glorified  
There is no comfort for an anguished world—  
If God have but the attributes of man  
Perfected—still the riddle is unread—  
Is there the noblest or the weakest man  
Who, drawn to Heav'n, could dimly contemplate  
A tithe of all the agony and woe.  
Which live on earth and have no antidote?—  
Where is there man, giv'n full decision and power,  
Would dare to launch such a terrific plan  
To gain an end to God-like eyes alone  
Apparent, as a Light beyond the murk,  
And yet no motto Jesuitical need  
As reason or excuse? . . .  
No—if indeed a living God doth brood  
Above the bloody struggle of our days,  
He must be such that human heart and brain  
Can never truly compass. We shall learn  
To understand, that never in this world  
Shall we, with human reason, understand—  
Must vision God as Something so immense  
With purpose and with plan beyond our ken,  
To Whom the Ultimate End of things is worth  
All agony—all raving—all despair—  
So we must dream a Love incredible,  
A Plan impossible—a Light unguessed—

## GOD INCOMPREHENSIBLE

Spirit Incomprehensible indeed.  
Or else believe all misery is chance,  
All happiness chance too, and death just death,  
And nothing more—all loved ones lost for aye,  
And all the purpose of the world a waste,  
And all the brain and energy of man  
A loss—and that Thing inexplicable  
Which men call soul, earthy and mortal only. . . .

Rather than this, I would endeavour me  
To rise above the littleness innate,  
Imagining a greatness far beyond  
Realisation—accounting me and you  
So small indeed that God is all too big  
For our minute and petty sight to hold—  
And so the Burning Bush, in these dark days,  
Blinds—till He deign new Vision to our eyes.

## INEQUALITY

I WOULD have given thee all of me,  
Deeming it friendship's part  
To hold the soul and mind as dear  
And needful as the heart.

But every callous word of thine  
Kills a small part of me,  
Though it may grow again in time,  
—Never again for thee.

## SOLICITUDE

I WANT to lead you from the paths of sorrow,  
And shield you from perplexities and sin—  
To lend you hope for unforeseen to-morrow,  
Finding the gates of peace to let you in—  
To smooth the lines between your grieving eyes  
And give you all of joy's virility,  
So then, together, we might recognise  
Some proof of love's immutability.

I want to show you how love oft is best  
When pain and sorrow lend their starry crown,  
How peace was never truly found in rest,  
How all God's winding roads lead up, not down.  
And through the years the brightness of our song  
Must live in heaven—though the world forget—  
And if we have not all for which we long,  
To tired souls at last Love pays his debt.



## FREE VERSE

It 's very difficult to write, of course,  
Needs brains . . .  
And lots of dots. . . . And what I can't get you  
To understand, is this . . . it 's very clever  
To have no rhyme, a paucity of reason,  
And no lilt in the thing at all . . .  
Lines all different lengths and sometimes  
Just one word in a line all by  
Itself . . .  
And the best of it is, one can go on for ever  
And ever . . . nothing can stop one  
(Except the scarcity of paper).  
Well, this is how it 's done. . . .  
Trying to those who live for melody in words—  
But it 's clever, very clever . . .  
And we 're all young Walt Whitmans  
Per-haps ! . . .

## OCTOBER MOON

Oh, little, misty, yellow moon  
    (There 's a piece a-missing still !)  
Oh, tell me now will my dream come true,  
When you 're grown old in your nest of blue ?  
    Little October moon.

Oh, little, shapeless, yellow moon  
    (With a piece a-missing now),  
When you 're older grown, shall I be free,  
From the haunting thoughts that girdle me ?  
    Little October moon.

Oh, little moon in a velvet sky  
    (You 've a piece a-missing yet !)  
All the common lamp-posts down below  
As mist-like stars through the darkness glow—  
    Little October moon.

So little cloud-wreathed, yellow moon  
    (With a piece a-missing still !)  
When you are old all my vague desires  
May flame perhaps as celestial fires—  
    Little October moon.

## LOOKING FOR MUSHROOMS

OF course it wasn't morning—the proper time to look,  
And never one we found but a toadstool by the brook,  
But we went by the hedges and past the haystack  
high,

—Searching round the tall trees beneath the evening  
sky.

And ankle-deep we stood there in the grass lush  
and green,

And a gay, elusive laugh ran between, ran between,  
While the little God of Mischief pranked to and fro—  
When we went hunting mushrooms a long time ago.

You thought you would look sad, but you couldn't  
if you tried,

You were so sentimental—I laughed till I cried.

And, oh, the silly things you said, with six feet  
between,

While I laughed and mocked in the shadow-dancing  
green.

Then I said you were foolish—you called me most  
unkind—

And all the time I knew you didn't really mind!

But my merry heart was tender for you, boy, I know,  
When we went hunting—mushrooms?—a long time  
ago.

## THE QUARREL

ONCE I thought you dearly loved me,  
But you let me go so lightly,  
Must I think that you did rightly—  
That unwittingly you proved me,  
Found me wanting in some fashion ?

There was many a happy story,  
Many a laughing jest you 'd tell me,  
Many a poem you would spell me—  
Till your silence stole the glory  
From our friendship's loosened binding.

You were nearer God than I was—  
Yet it never seemed to matter,  
Age and distance love can scatter.  
Just as near to me the sky was—  
I could see the stars as you could.

Was it some unmeaning letter  
Made you think your love embittered,  
Some chill phrase that coldly glittered  
In your heart—made it seem better  
To be done with all my friendship ?

## THE QUARREL

One day, as you muse the tangle,  
Of a sudden you will ponder,  
And a quick enlightened wonder  
Will make lucid all the jangle—  
You will KNOW I never failed you.

We shall say, with love's renewal,  
Some malignant spirit spelled us,  
Some enchantment evil held us,  
Made each see the other cruel—  
Then we 'll shut out pain for ever.

## THE LITTLE PLACE IN ZUMMERZET

FROM London town to Curry it 's a good long way,  
But my heart travels faster than the train,  
And it 's oh, my thoughts are drifting there with  
    great white, summer clouds,  
Or falling there with slanting summer rain.  
And I know when skies grow bluer and the sun gets  
    old and bright,  
I 'll be off away from London (and London will not  
    mind)  
To the little place that loves me and that I have  
    loved so much,  
Where the welcome 's always warm and the true  
    hearts always kind,  
    —That 's dear little Curry  
        Down Zummerzeta way.

From London town to Curry 'tis a good long way,  
That London 's much to us we don't pretend—  
'Tis the things that be in ' Tarnton,' they 're the  
    things to interest us,  
Where every man 's your cousin or your friend.  
But they say it 's dull in Curry—well, from dewy  
    morn to dark  
I 'm as happy as a cricket there with nothing much  
    to do,

## THE LITTLE PLACE IN ZUMMERZET

In the little place I've known and loved for many  
a happy year,  
Where folk are always found the same—that's  
always staunch and true,  
—In dear little Curry  
Down Zummerzets way.

From London town to Curry 'tis a fairish way,  
But oh, when I arrive it's green and sweet.  
In the springtide when the water's up like lakes  
across the 'moors,'  
And the wood's astar with blossoms 'neath my  
feet—  
Or in summer when we ride away to picnic in the  
hills,  
Home-coming as the sun sets, golden, glorious, in the  
west—  
And when the night comes closing round, you'll  
hear the laughter ring,  
(For we're smart and quick, I tell 'ee, with a merry  
word and jest.)  
—In dear little Curry  
Down Zummerzets way.

From London town to Curry—'tisn't very far—  
The journey isn't anything to fear,  
And it's oh, I love the purple hills and green fields  
stretching far,  
Yes, every little bit of them is dear.

## THIS, MY SINGING

Yet when I fall to dreaming of the little place I love,  
The thing I think of last and most, as you may guess,  
is this—

That there are loving, loyal folk, who wait to welcome  
me,

(And they all know how to greet me for they all  
know how to kiss !)

—In dear little Curry

Down Zummerzset way.



## A MOOD

SOMETIMES my prison seems so wide, so wide,  
I scarcely seem to be inside—  
Sometimes it narrows in and closes round,  
And then I must feel caged and bound.  
My fetters are but clinging, childish arms,  
And baby kisses are the charms  
That bind me and forbid me to look back  
To seek the old-time witchery I lack.

Yet sometimes I must turn and look without,  
And see old playfellows about,  
Folly and Youth upon the hillside stand,  
Laughing and swaying, hand-in-hand—  
Crying, ' The sunlight dances down the hollow  
And beckons to us—Follow—Follow !  
Once on a time we three had but one heart—  
Come with us once again before we part.'

So from my happy cage I needs must look,  
My fetters sweet can hardly brook—  
Turn restless from my gaolers small,  
And long to climb the outer wall—  
To find the wings to take me o'er  
To those old playfellows once more—  
Once, once again with the wild wind to ride,  
To dance and play a-down the valley wide.

## THIS, MY SINGING

Once to go singing o'er the sunlit hill,  
Before my dancing feet be still—  
Once to chase Folly, hand-in-hand with Youth,  
Before we say good-bye in truth.  
Once more to frolic, laugh, and dance as wild  
As any careless, joyous child—  
Then Folly—Youth—to you I'd wave farewell,  
And, in my happy cage contented dwell.

## THE HEART OF A POETASTER

WITHIN the poet's heart a secret dwells,  
A fear that is alive with griping dread—  
It is that he shall sing no lasting song  
Which shall endure when he has gone. He  
knows

If he possess no force to make his verse  
An urgent, deathless thing to thrall mens' souls,  
Better he 'd never strung his feeble lyre—  
Better that he had lived and died full soon  
Within some monkish seminary, where  
He had worn monkish passions, cloister-cool.  
There he had lost his passionate sense of song,  
Nor spent his mind in riot and excess  
Of dancing words—nor held out trembling hands  
To the jade Fancy, with her jewelled brow.

Like to some tender-hearted man who fain  
Would see within the eyes and smile of her  
Who was his mistress once, the old-time spell  
And sweet enchantment of a day gone by—  
So the poor Word-Artificer adores  
His youngling Verse, and in the days to come  
Yearns to renew his tenderness, but now  
Sees but the faultiness of jejune rhyme.









